

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00122 01 OF 02 160529Z

11

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 OMB-01 A-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 CPR-01 OPR-02 /060 W

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R 160435Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO USIA WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5949

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 0122

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT: DISSOLUTION OF LAO AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

REF: VIENTIANE 0086

1. MORNING JANUARY 12, TWO MOI OFFICIALS, SAMLY, DIRECTOR OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS, AND SOUWITH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE "KHAO SAN PATHET LAO" (LAO PRESSE), VISITED LAA, APPARENTLY FOLLOWING UP JANUARY 10 MEETING WITH VIENTIANE DEFENSE POLICE. SAMLY AND SOUWITH ADVISED DIRECTOR GLAUBERMAN THAT AN INVENTORY OF LAA PROPERTY WOULD HAVE TO BE DRAWN UP BY 1400. NOTHING WAS TO BE REMOVED OR DESTROYED FROM BUILDING EXCEPT FOR ASSOCIATION'S RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS.1

2. AT 1430 SAMLY, SOUWITH AND A "KHAO SAN PATHET LAO" NEWSMAN RETURNED. OVER STRAWBERRY SODA THEY WENT OVER INVENTORY WITH GLAUBERMAN AND STAFF ASSISTANT SOULIVANH. SAMLY PRAISED LAA FOR BEING HONEST AND GENEROUS AND GLAUBERMAN RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT THE LAA HAD NO REASON TO HOLD ANYTHING BACK; AFTER ALL, IT WAS AN
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00122 01 OF 02 160529Z

ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING BONDS OF FRIEND-

SHIP. SOULIVANH THEN PRESENTED LAA'S REQUEST FOR RETURN OF BOOKS AND EXHIBIT MATERIALS TO USIS AND OF AMERICAN FLAGS TO THE EMBASSY; DONATION OF A FILMSTRIP PROJECTOR AND FILM-STRIPS TO THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AND OF TEXT-BOOKS AND TEACHING MATERIALS TO THE DONG DOK TEACHERS TRAINING COLLEGE; AND PERMISSION TO BRING IN ITEMS FOR FAREWELL "BACI" CEREMONY ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14. THE PL SEEMED PARTICULARLY HAPPY OVER DONATION OF BOOKS TO DONG DOK. MR. WOUWITH THEN SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, HOW RELATIONS WERE GOOD AND WOULD, NO DOUBT, GET BETTER. HE REPEATEDLY THANKED LAA AND BOARD MEMBERS FOR ALL THE "GIFTS" AND SAID THAT THE GENEROSITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN.

3. LATER THAT DAY SOUWITH RETURNED TO NOTIFY PL GUARD DETACHMENT THAT ITEMS SPECIFIED BY LAA COULD BE REMOVED. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SORADETJ BANNOUVONG, AN LAA TEACHER AND MOI FUNCTIONARY. SOUWITH SAID SORADETJ WOULD BE IN CHARGE OF AN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE-TRAINING PROGRAM IN THE MINISTRY AND WOULD BE GIVEN TEXTS AND MATERIALS.

4. ITEMS LISTED ABOVE WERE REMOVED FROM BUILDING JANUARY 13 AND 14.

5. ON THE MORNING OF JANUARY 14 SOUWITH INFORMED DIRECTOR GLAUBERMAN THAT HE WOULD LIKE TURNOVER OF BUILDING TO TAKE PLACE THAT DAY RATHER THAN ON JANUARY 16 AS INDICATED EARLIER.

6. AT NOON ON JANUARY 14 AT A FAREWELL "BACI" HELD BY DIRECTOR GLAUBERMAN FOR STAFF, TEACHERS, AND PEOPLE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH LAA VALOUNNA CHOULRANOUNY, THE LAST REMAINING 1975 BOARD MEMBER, OF 12, AND ONE OF THE ORIGINAL LAA FOUNDERS 19 YEARS AGO, SPOKE. VALOUNNA DESCRIBED MEETING WITH MINISTER OF INFORMATION SISANA SISANE AT WHICH HE INQUIRED ABOUT REASONS FOR LAA'S CLOSURE, INFORMED SISANA THAT HE HAD BEEN A BOARD MEMBER AND ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD HAVE A PROBLEM. (VALOUNNA, A NEPHEW OF DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS SINGAPO SIKHOTCHOUNAMALY, AND AN EMPLOYEE OF AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN FRANK MANLEY, IS ONE OF THOSE U.S.-EDUCATED LAO WHO IS MAKING A DETERMINED EFFORT TO STAY.)

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PAGE 03 VIENTI 00122 01 OF 02 160529Z

VALOUNNA SAID THE MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT THE DISSOLUTION OF THE LAA WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE OF THE NEW SITUATION, BUT THAT HAVING BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH IT WOULD NOT BE HARMFUL. VALOUNNA DESCRIBED LAA AS A "BONE IN THE THROAT" OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT AT THIS TIME, BUT BASED ON EVENTS SUCH AS RENEWED CONTRACT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT U.S. AND LAO RELATIONS WOULD IMPROVE.

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00122 02 OF 02 160533Z

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 0122

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7. AT 1700 THAT AFTERNOON MOI'S DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION SAMLI PHIMMAVONG, SOUWITH AND TWO OTHERS ACCEPTED THE BUILDING AFTER GLAUBERMAN AND SOULIVANH SPENT 90 MINUTES TAKING THEM AROUND, POINTING OUT LOCATION OF EVERYTHING DOWN TO LIGHT SWITCHES. IN GLAUBERMAN'S WORDS, THE FOUR WERE "LIKE CHILDREN" AS THEY WERE SHOWN FACILITY AND HOW TO OPERATE VARIOUS MACHINES. HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT AFTER 30 MINUTES OF EXPLANATION NOT ONE OF THEM COULD OPEN A SMALL COMBINATION SAFE MAY NOT AUGUR WELL FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT; IN FACT, SOUWITH EXPRESSED INTEREST IN HIRING A NUMBER OF THE LAA'S LAO STAFF. UPON DEPARTURE OFFICIALS SIGNED A RECEIPT FOR LAA BUILDING, VEHICLE AND INVENTORY, THANKED GLAUBERMAN AND ASKED WHETHER HE WISHED A STATEMENT OF APPRECIATION BROADCAST OVER LAO RADIO. GLAUBERMAN REPLIED THAT THIS WAS UP TO THEM, TO WHICH THE OFFICIALS REMARKED THEY WOULD HAVE TO GET THEIR MINISTER'S APPROVAL. TO DATE NOTHING HAS BEEN BROADCAST.

8. GLAUBERMAN COMPLETED SEVERANCE PAYMENTS FOR EMPLOYEES AND INSTRUCTORS MORNING OF JANUARY 14. ALL THAT REMAINS IS PREPARATION OF FINAL QUARTER GRANT JUSTIFICATION AND RESOLVING MATTER OF BANK ACCOUNTS. POST EXPECTS TO ADVISE AGENCY

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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00122 02 OF 02 160533Z

REGARDING ACCOUNTS SOON.

9. MOI BEGAN MOVING IN RADIO EQUIPMENT, I.E., BRITISH-
AND CHINESE-MADE TRANSMITTERS, INDICATING THEY PROBABLY
WILL TAKE OVER FACILITY.

10. COMMENT: CLOSING OF LAA HAS BEEN SAD FOR REMAINING
STUDENTS -- MANY OF WHOM, AFTER READING ABOUT DISSOLUTION
ORDER, ASKED WHERE ASSOCIATION WOULD BE RE-ESTABLISHED. FOR
SEVEN REMAINING LAO TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, MOSTLY U.S. ALUMNI,
ACTION IS ANOTHER REMINDER OF THE LIMITATIONS OF THEIR CREDENTIALS.
HOWEVER, IN ALL FAIRNESS, MANNER IN WHICH TAKEOVER HANDLED BY
PDRL INDICATES PERHAPS THEY WANTED TO AVOID GIVING IMPRESSION
THAT ACTION REPRESENTED START OF NEW SERIES OF HARASSMENTS.
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